

## SAVED BY HIS DAUGHTER

HOW CHAPLAIN KANE ONCE  
TOOK AIM AT JEFF DAVIS.

Story Told for the First Time of a Plot  
to Kill the President of the Confederacy  
While He Was a Prisoner.

There is told every year for the first time some startling event of the stirring scenes between '61 and '65, which afterward becomes a part of the history of that momentous period.

The story of the capture of Jeff Davis has been printed often and with facts varying so greatly that the Northern or Southern reader cannot help but find some account to suit him. It is hardly probable, says the New York Herald, that it will ever be known whether or not he was in feminine attire when captured, but this is of minor importance in comparison with the fact, now for the first time published, that when the head of the Southern Confederacy was imprisoned in the United States transport Clyde, prior to being transferred to Fortress Monroe, he was tried by a mock court martial, sentenced to be shot, and only the appearance of his little daughter prevented the appointed executioner from pulling the trigger that would undoubtedly have sent a bullet through his heart.

The determination to avenge the assassination of President Lincoln by summarily ending the career of Davis was the result of a regular but unofficial trial by a number of the officers on board the United States steamer Pontoosuc, then acting as guard of the transport Clyde. The man who was selected to carry out the plan was Ensign James J. Kane, now chaplain at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and well known throughout the country as the oldest chaplain in point of service in the navy. Ensign Kane had served in the Navy from 1861. He was a capital shot, the hero of many adventures, and, like many others at that time, believed the Scriptural requirement for the forgiveness of enemies did not extend far enough to save the life of Davis.

The movements of the party that captured Davis, from the time the capture was made until the prize was safely landed at Fortress Monroe, were shrouded in mystery. It was feared that the Union soldiers would kill him at any opportunity, and Colonel Pritchard, of the Fourth Michigan, and eighty men were kept on guard aboard the steamer Emilie and afterward on the Clyde, to which the party was transferred in Hampton Roads. Among the prisoners besides Jeff Davis were his wife and sister and three children; Alexander H. Stephens, Mr. Reagan, Postmaster-General of the Confederacy; Clement C. Clay and wife, General Wheeler and staff, Colonels Johnson and Lubbeck of Davis' staff, Major Morand, Captain Moody, Lieutenant Hathaway and several privates. The party arrived opposite Fortress Monroe on May 19th, and orders to land were not received until May 23d. In the meantime the feeling against Davis reached fever heat. There were demands that he be shot from thousands of loyal people of the North, and threats of death on the lips of soldiers still in the south, who believed Davis should be hanged to avenge the death of Lincoln.

Much of the talk of the officers on the Pontoosuc was naturally about the closing scenes of the war and the prisoner whom the ship was there to guard. The chance that Davis might escape the death punishment was looked upon as a possible disgrace to the honor of the Republic that could only be averted by summary action. This was the finding by the improvised court-martial, consisting of a group of officers off duty, and Ensign Kane was appointed to kill Davis at the first chance. The opportunity came on May 23rd. The Pontoosuc and Clyde were then lying within 300 yards of each other. Ensign Kane and a number of his brother officers met in his room. The scene that followed is described in his own words: "Jeff Davis," he said, "was sitting in a steamer chair on the deck of the Clyde. It was a clear day and I could see him as plainly as if he had been but one hundred feet away. I loaded an Enfield rifle I had picked up on the battle field of Fort Fisher, and resting the muzzle in an air port, aimed it at the heart of Davis. I feel confident I could have sent a bullet to the target, but some influence prevented me from pulling the trigger.

"I can't do it," I said to my comrades, but they urged me to fire, and told me I would be justified in doing so. "It would be murder," I said, and one of them answered: "Think of the death of Lincoln." With that I took aim again and even touched the trigger, but a psychological force I now think was of divine origin prevented me from doing the act which would have ruined me forever after. I still hesitated, however, and was still aiming when the little daughter of Davis came on deck with a lady who was probably her mother and ran into her father's arms. It was then impossible to shoot without endangering the life of the little girl, and I laid up the gun. A short time afterward, and before the child had left the arms of its father, the vessels drifted apart, making it impossible for any of the other officers to do the killing.

"I have been thankful ever since that I was restrained from doing what would have been an extremely rash act, and I have never until now related the incident except with a requirement of secrecy."

Chaplain Kane has been stationed at the Brooklyn Navy Yard for nearly a year. He received his commission as

(Concluded on Fourth Page.)

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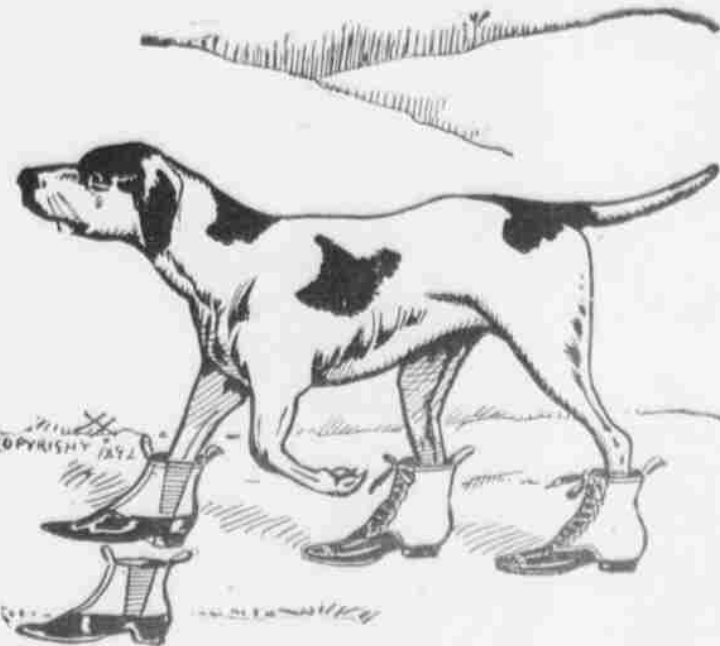
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